

The Brethren Evangelist,

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OUR LITERATURE.

In a series of short editorials, we purpose to discuss the subject of *Literature* in the Brethren church. The importance of controlling a literature that is strictly our own is not to be questioned at this period of our existence as a church organization. And it is gratifying to notice that the church is thoroughly alive along this line of work. Among the healthful signs of the church are these two: The interest manifested in a higher education and a better and higher standard of literature. A Gospel-alone doctrine needs for its promulgation, Gospel-alone preachers. We cannot depend on ministers of other denominations to preach the doctrines peculiar to our church. We want our children in *Brethren* Sunday-schools and in *Brethren* churches. We prefer to have them hear the Gospel proclaimed by ministers of our own communion, and taught by teachers of our own faith. Why? Because we feel that they are safer under such instructions than under any other.

What is true of preaching is true also of the church's literature. We need our own literature—we *must* have it, if we would become a power for good in the promulgation of the Gospel truths which we hold sacred. If our boys and girls are to be taught in Brethren schools, by Brethren teachers, why should they not study their lessons from Brethren quarterlies? Why have a Young People's Society of our own, and not our own literature? If other literature is good enough for our young people, then other societies are good enough and the K. C. becomes a useless society. If lesson helps prepared by those not of our faith, will do for our children, then *sermons* prepared by them will do also, and so will other schools, and Brethren schools are needless. The same principle applies to all our societies and different organizations. If there is need for Gospel-alone preaching, there must be a need for a literature in harmony with it. This is one of the things to which the church should bend its energies—a *distinctive literature*. In our next issue we shall speak of the *reason* for our existence as a church organization, and from it deduce an argument for doctrinal literature.

OUR CONTRIBUTIONS.

We have been favored with quite liberal responses to our call for contributions. There is on hand some very good reading matter, and we trust our contributors will not become impatient if several weeks pass before their articles appear. The abler writers in the church are being awakened to a sense of their obligations, realizing more fully the relation they sustain to the literature of the church. At present there is a movement on foot, started by one of our most intelligent laymen, which, if carried to completion, will furnish our readers the richest feast they have ever enjoyed in the way of Brethren literature. It affords us pleasure to announce this awakening to the need of a higher standard of literature. It is a healthful sign, a sign of real progress, an evidence of *growth* in the right direction.

If the Brethren church is to have a literature that will commend itself to the favorable consideration of thinking men and women outside of our own communion, it *must be the product of thinking men and women in the church*. We have brethren and sisters who *can* write—write entertainingly, write instructively, who *say* something worth saying and worth reading. There is *talent* in the church, much of it *buried* talent, slumbering powers that have never been called into activity, partly because the circumstances and environments have not been favorable. Let there *now* be an awakening of these dormant powers; let them be called forth into active service. We want the *best* the church has. Our literature is meant to *instruct*, to *teach*, and should be the product of the best thought in possession of the church.

Let us cease quibbling about things that do not concern the salvation of souls; foolish controversies, that can but create strife and contention, and confine ourselves to that which edifies, helps us in our work, prepares us for larger usefulness and lifts us to a higher plane of life.

A WORD TO OUR PASTORS.

We want church news. Our people want it. We must depend on pastors to furnish it. Let every pastor appoint a correspondent in his congregation, whose duty it shall be to make monthly reports for the paper. The former editor, Brother Harrison, inaugurated this work, and it proved a very interesting feature of the EVANGELIST. As a rule, the news can be reported on a postal card—it is not necessary to write long letters. It is church

news the people are interested in. The fact that you took your "grip" and went to a certain depot to take the train at a certain hour, is not a matter of news. The majority of people do not care where you ate your dinner nor *what* you ate, but the people are interested in the success of your Sunday-school, the prayer meeting, Young people's society, S. S. C. E., and especially in the conversion of souls. Report statistics.

To write an article for the paper that will prove a real benefit, that will edify and instruct, requires some ability on the part of the writer, but church news may be reported by any one capable of writing a plain hand. Those who have an ambition to write for the paper, and yet lack the ability necessary to furnish readable and instructive contributions, may find something to do in furnishing church news. The time has come when contributed articles must be selected from among the productions of our best thinkers, when the editor must be granted the privilege to reject what in his opinion is not suitable matter for the columns of the paper. But we invite all who have any church news to report to send it in. A regular correspondent in each congregation would avoid the repetition of the same news.

TRUTH FROM FRANCE.

"Waste no time in cultivating the crab-tree; it must be grafted." A Christian Frenchman, whose name is unknown to us, after quoting this, says it was an advice given to him by an intensely successful Christian man, and that as he sees the very disappointing results of honest effort without God, and the continually blighted hopes of those who try to soften down the asperities of the truth of God to make it palatable to the world, this advice is often brought to his mind. He adds some remarks which, we fear, find many illustrations in this country: "The delicately-inclined plane prepared for the world to go up into the Church of Christ is almost exclusively used by quondam believers to glide down into the world. A note of warning is sounded here and there concerning the most promising institutions, such as Christian Associations and Endeavor Societies [and Epworth Leagues,] against such introduction of unregenerated elements as will draw the young believers down this plane."—*The Christian Advocate*.

I WOULD rather have a church of five-and-twenty members, than a crowd of twenty times that number.—*Dr. John Hall*.